

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Todd Akin, Chairman of the Seapower & Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee and member of the House Budget Committee, released the following statement in response to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' "efficiency" proposals:

"I appreciate Secretary Gates' effort to find inefficiencies and waste in the DOD budget. Congress and the Administration must work together to ensure that every single tax dollar is spent wisely. There are certainly wasteful and inefficient parts of the DOD that should be cut. At the same time, I find it stunning that the Obama Administration thinks cutting almost \$80 billion from our defense budget while we are at war is a responsible course of action. I have a number of concerns about the specifics as well as the overall priorities this action reveals. If Secretary Gates wants Congress to even consider supporting any of these proposals, he must personally ensure that Congress receives the information we need, rather than stiff-arming the Congress as has been the norm for the last few years.

"First, I think this announcement shows the liberal priorities of this Administration. The only department undertaking a serious budget cutting exercise is the Department of Defense. Where are the similar reviews at any other executive department? Our military is at war, and our military is the only department asked to seriously tighten its budget?

"Second, President Obama's budget shop has already shown an interest in "harvesting" even the reinvested savings and applying them outside the Department of Defense, rather than letting the military use these funds for other priorities as Secretary Gates has proposed. I am worried that Gates will propose these cuts, walk out the door, and leave the military with a constricting budget and little political support to oppose an even larger cut.

"Third, many of these cuts seem to have been decided upon in a vacuum, ignoring the strategic situation our nation is in, and the capabilities we need to fight and win today and tomorrow. For example, do we as a nation think that the Marine Corps should be able to get from ships to the shore in a battle? If so, cutting the EFV is absurd. If the President and the Secretary of Defense want to get rid of the Marine Corps, they should come out and say that directly.

"While my concerns are significant, and these proposals will require serious oversight from the Armed Services Committee, I do think elements of the reinvestments make sense. In particular, buying more F/A-18's to fill the gap created by the JSF delays makes a lot of sense and is

something that I have championed for years. These Super Hornets will help address the Navy's strike fighter shortfall and are a great deal for taxpayers. I look forward to hearings on every aspect of this proposal."